

## Civics Research Table

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Branch of Government</u>	<u>Discussion</u>
<b>Textbook Prices and Bundling</b>	<b>State</b>	<p><b>House Bill 6699</b> requires state universities, regional universities and Evergreen College bookstores to provide textbooks that are not bundled with workbooks and CD-Rom. A study from the Government Accountability Office shows that textbook prices almost tripled between 1986 and 2004. This increase, according to the GAO, was in large part due to additional items “bundled” with text books. During the 2003-2004 school year, the average four-year university student spent \$900 on textbooks. Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bookstores must provide alternatives in a non-bundled form.</li> <li>• Bookstores must disclose actual cost of the materials and how new editions of textbooks vary from older editions.</li> <li>• Bookstores must actively promote a book buy back program and disclose retail costs for courses on a course by course basis.</li> </ul> <p>Status – Passed in Senate, Died in House, returned to Senate Rules Committee. (Not passed into law in the 2006 Session.)</p>
<b>Affirmative Action</b>	<b>State</b>	<p><b>I-914</b> or “the Civil Rights Act” expands I-200 (an initiative that prohibited the state from granting any preferential treatment to any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin in public employment, contracting and education) to not only address public education and workplaces, but to also prevent private businesses and universities from giving preferential treatment on these grounds. Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The universities, both private and public, will not be allowed to ask an applicant’s race, gender, or national origin in admission applications.</li> <li>• Seattle Public Schools will also not be allowed to ask about student’s race, gender, or national origin prior to the day that the student is enrolled in a school.</li> <li>• Transportation authorities and states may not collect any information from contractors that provide directly or indirectly the race, sex, color, or national origin of contractors or subcontractors.</li> <li>• Private businesses would not be allowed to institute affirmative action in their businesses.</li> </ul> <p>WITHDRAWN BY SPONSOR - See the Elections Website for other Referendums and Initiatives that have been filed by this sponsor and others.</p> <p><a href="http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/initiatives/2005InitiativesReferenda.aspx">http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/initiatives/2005InitiativesReferenda.aspx</a></p>
<b>Renters “Late Fees”</b>	<b>State</b>	<p><b>Senate Bill 6227</b> would have imposed a limitation on late fees charged by landlords. In some cases late fees are more than one month’s rent. The bill would have set a limit and a period for which rent would be considered late within in the residential landlord tenant act. Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landlord would not be able to impose a late fee that exceeded ten percent of the cost of rent or \$50, which ever is greater.</li> <li>• Late fees for rent could not be charged more than once a month.</li> <li>• A tenant could not be evicted wholly on failure to pay late fees—but a landlord could deduct fees from security deposit.</li> <li>• Five day grace period created before fines could be imposed on residential tenants.</li> </ul> <p>Died in Senate after public hearing in committee on January 12<sup>th</sup>.</p>

Landlord background checks	State	<p><b>House Bill 2450</b> tried to require landlords to provide tenants or tenant applicants with proof of the fees accumulated while doing background checks. Right now the tenant may be charged for background checks. This legislation would have required the landlord to provide some proof that such costs were suffered by the landlord while obtaining the background check. If a landlord failed to provide such information the landlord could be required to pay the tenant up to \$100.</p> <p>Died in House after public hearing in house committee on January 17<sup>th</sup>.</p>
Unemployment	Federal/State Blanket Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployment nationally is two-to-three times higher for 18-24 year-olds than for the population as a whole.</li> <li>• College students enrolled in school do not count as part of the "working" population and thus are not included in these figures. These figures encapsulate those who have recently graduated from college or never attended.</li> </ul> <p>PENDING</p>
Health Insurance	Federal/State Blanket Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 30% rate of 18-24 year-olds who are un-insured is twice the rate for the population as a whole and represents the largest rate among all Americans. 25-34 year-olds aren't far behind, with a 26.4% un-insured rate.</li> <li>• Uninsured trauma victims are less likely to be admitted to the hospital, receive fewer services when admitted, and are more likely to die than privately insured trauma victims. (Institute of Medicine. (2002). "Care Without Coverage: Too Little, Too Late – Report Brief" p. 73. (<a href="http://books.nap.edu/books/0309083435/html/73.html#pagetop">http://books.nap.edu/books/0309083435/html/73.html#pagetop</a>). Cite retrieved on Aug. 2, 2004.)</li> <li>• Legislation recently passed in New Hampshire to protect those who are on their parent's health insurance when they get very ill.</li> </ul> <p>If a college student suddenly becomes seriously ill or injured and cannot maintain a full time college schedule, he or she has three choices under current law:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintaining a full time schedule against doctor's advice and possibly decreasing his or her chance of getting well.</li> <li>2. Cutting back his or her hours and losing the very health benefits he or she is relying on for recovery, or</li> <li>3. Cutting back his or her hours and paying the cost of maintaining health insurance through C.O.B.R.A, the premiums for which are often too great for a family to bear.</li> </ol> <p>See Appendix A: A cursory look at Washington law suggests that no such legislation has gone through the state.</p> <p>NO VISABLE PLANS IN WASHINGTON STATE</p>

<b>Cell Phones</b>	<b>State</b>	<p>Impact: According to the Center for Information &amp; Research on Civic Learning &amp; Engagement, 19% of those ages 18-24 do not have landlines and only have cell phones.</p> <p>Legislation: SB 6776 Prohibits the unauthorized sale of cell phone numbers by every corporation, company, association, joint stock association, partnership, and person, their lessees, trustees, or receivers appointed by any court, and every city or town making available facilities to provide radio communications service, radio paging, or cellular communications service for hire, sale, or resale.</p> <p>Governor signed into law on March 24, 2006.</p>
<b>Smoking Ban</b>	<b>State</b>	<p><b>I-901</b> : As Julie Davidow wrote in the Seattle PI the day after the smoking ban sailed to a victory, "Soon, smokers will be asking for more than a light. They're also going to need a tape measure."</p> <p>Impact: bans smoking inside public places and workplaces. It forbids lighting up within 25 feet of doors, windows and vents. However, passers-by are exempted.</p> <p>The win for Initiative 901 gives Washington the nation's strictest statewide smoking ban, barring smoking in places such as bars, restaurants, clubs, bowling alleys and non-tribal casinos. The measure takes effect in 30 days.</p>
<b>Gay Rights Bill</b>	<b>State</b>	<p>The gay civil rights legislation passed late last month—but has a real and significant threat for Tim Eyman who has filled a referendum to overturn the bill that forbids landlords and employers from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or on the basis of gender identity.</p>